

STILLWATER WILDLIFE MANAGEMENT AREA  
Fallon, Nevada

ANNUAL WATER MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

January 1, 1973 to December 31, 1973

Purpose

The Water Management Program summarizes last year's water receipts, distribution and marsh conditions attributed to the water supply. From the cooperative snow survey data of the eastern slopes of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the current water supply outlook is presented, along with a plan of unit management for optimum use of the anticipated water supply.

Summary - Water Conditions During Calendar Year 1972

Snowpack in the Sierra Nevada Mountains was above normal early in the year, but streamflow later was only 60-75% of average. Excellent reservoir storage offset deficiencies, so farm irrigation needs were met. At the end of 1972, Lahontan Reservoir storage was 132% of normal.

Water again spilled into the Carson Sink from the Humboldt Sink. Over half of the Carson Sink was flooded, coming close to the Pelican Island Dike. By mid-summer, the Carson Sink was dry.

During the irrigation season, Truckee-Carson Irrigation District used about 383,000 acre feet of water. Farmers began irrigating at the start of the season, March 15th, for soils were very dry. The Management Area received little water early in the spring.

The summer was hot and dry, with high evaporation and transpiration losses in the marsh. Water flows in the irrigation district were managed more judiciously this year, resulting in small flows to Stillwater Wildlife Management Area.

Exceptionally large amounts of precipitation fell during September and October so no irrigation was necessary for the rest of the season. In the past, releases into the canals would have continued, ending up in the Management Area. But Truckee-Carson Irrigation District closed down releases from Lahontan Dam to reduce their total water use for the season.

The Management Area's net annual receipt totaled about 65,000 acre feet. Even with the low water receipts, about 1,500 acre feet had to be dumped into the brush because of insufficient storage in Indian Lakes. About 20% of Lahontan Reservoir releases entered the Management Area.

Approximately 16,100 acres of marsh and open water were in production. Conditions rated between fair and good. With smaller water receipts, salinity was above desirable levels in most units which decreased plant production. No units produced exceptionally well.

Upper Foxtail, East Alkali Flat #2, Division Pond and Pelican Island area were dry most of the year. Swan Lake received no water this year, and it was dry by September. Water had to be stopped to Willow-Millen during the summer and its level dropped. Other units were maintained near operating levels, with slight drops in summer months. Where possible, units were raised for the hunting season.

#### Water Outlook for Calendar Year 1973

The April Water Supply Outlook for Nevada, published by the Soil Conservation District, forecasts the Carson River at Fort Churchill to flow 29% above average from April-July. Snowpack in the Lake Tahoe drainage is 121% of normal. On April 1, Lahontan Reservoir storage was 263,000 acre feet, compared to the average of 217,000 acre feet.

Truckee-Carson Irrigation District's water allocation for the 1973 irrigation season is 350,000 acre feet. With the wet spring, canals were not filled until April 1st, so Stillwater Wildlife Management Area received little water early this year. Hot, dry weather can be anticipated this summer and fall. Truckee-Carson Irrigation District will continue to improve its water delivery operation. Based on these assumptions, water receipts to the Management Area are expected to be similar to last year's.

Annual net water receipts to Stillwater Wildlife Management Area is foreseen to be about 60,000 acre feet.

#### Water Management Within Stillwater Wildlife Management Area During Calendar Year 1973

Plans for this year's water operation are based around 60,000 acre feet. On the following page the table summarizes the marsh units that will be in production.

Approximately 15,225 acres of marsh habitat can be maintained for most of the year. Two pastures should be irrigated at least twice to preserve them. Water use for this total acreage amounts to 61,200 acre feet.

By late summer, the levels of most units will drop. The degree to which units will be maintained at operating levels will depend upon water receipts. East Alkali Flat #1 was a foot below operating level on April 1. It will be filled early in May. Willow-Millen Lakes were filled early in the year, but inflows will be stopped in June or July so that better producing units can be maintained. If water receipts become less than anticipated, Cattail and Division Pond will be drawn down. Stillwater Point Reservoir will not be maintained as a habitat unit, but solely as a storage facility. Its level will be allowed to fluctuate and will probably be very low by October.

UNIT OPERATION FOR 1973

<u>Unit</u>	<u>Acres</u>	<u>Acre Feet</u>
Stillwater Point Reservoir	1,300	5,800
Foxtail Lake	1,075	4,600
Dry Lake	550	2,100
Cattail Lake	200	700
Division Pond	50	200
East Alkali Flat #1	500	2,300
Goose Lake	1,000	4,100
Swan Lake Check	300	1,200
Nutgrass Unit	3,375	13,100
Pintail Bay	1,500	6,000
Tule Lake	1,025	4,500
Lead Lake	1,025	4,100
Willow-Millen Lakes	2,200	5,000
Indian Lakes	725	3,400
Pelican Island	<u>400</u>	<u>3,000</u>
Total	15,225	60,100
 Pasture Maintenance		
East Pasture	430	800
Paiute Pasture	<u>200</u>	<u>300</u>
Total	630	1,100

Pelican Island will receive an estimated 3,000 acre feet that can be used beneficially. This water comes sporadically during the months, so at times more than 400 acres are flooded. It is estimated about 400 acres of habitat would be maintained most of the year. It should be pointed out that most of this water going to Pelican Island is unintentional, and all the water possible should be diverted at Sagouspe Dam to Indian Lakes.

Units that will be completely eliminated this year include Upper Foxtail, Doghead Pond, East Alkali Flat #2 and Swan Lake which total about 2,100 acres.

Prepared by,

*Larry D. Napier*

Larry D. Napier  
Wildlife Biologist

April 20, 1973

APPROVED:

*Frank W. Levy*

Director, Nevada Department of Fish and Game

*Ronald J. Hauke*

Acting

Regional Director, Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife